

ADDITIONAL FEE:

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R E M A R K S

The Office Action issued May 27, 2003 has been received and its contents have been carefully considered.

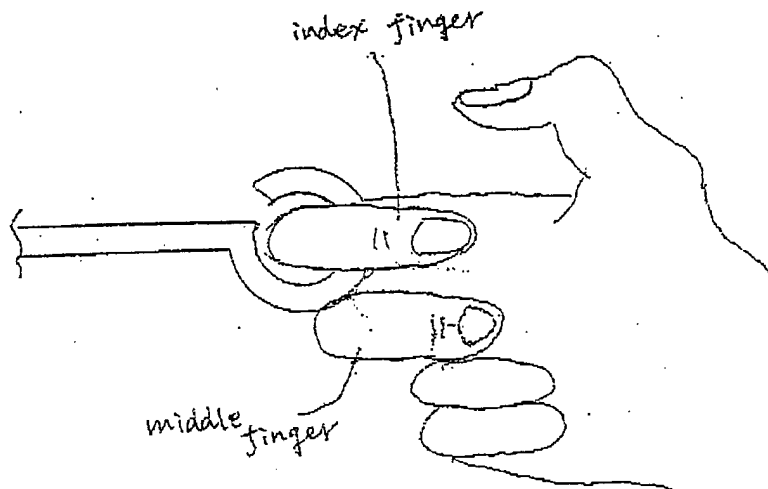
Claims 13-22 of this application have been canceled and new claims 23-27 added. Claim 23 is the only independent claim of this group.

Claim 23 is directed to the sheet member fixing device shown in Fig. 34. As is seen there, this device comprises a rod 512 which is bent at right angles to form a hook 524 at one end (the "first end") and bent into a ring shape to form a handle 528 at the other end (the "second end"). A male thread is provided on a portion of the rod near the hook and a nut 516 with a female thread is screwed onto the male thread.

The fixing device of Fig. 34 also includes a washer 520.

Preferably, the hook 524 points in one direction (claim 26) and the nut 516 is a wing nut which can be screwed down by hand (claim 27).

The advantage of this device is that it can be easily held by one hand using an index finger and middle finger as shown in the diagram below:



None of the references of record teach or suggest a simple sheet member fixing device as is now recited in independent claim 23. The two references applied in the

outstanding Office Action -- namely, the U.S. Patent No. 3,100,336 to Fannin and the U.S. Patent No. 4,502,317 to Hultquist -- disclose certain elements of applicants' device, but omit certain important details.

Fannin teaches a dent repair device having a rectangular handle at one end. It also fails to provide a male thread on the rod and a nut with a female thread which may be screwed down toward the hook end.

Hultquist discloses a relatively complicated device formed of separate parts. Although Hultquist does disclose a ring shaped handle in Figs. 11 and 12, this handle 50 comprises a separate shank 52 which contains internal threads so that it may be threaded onto the rod or shank 1 of the device (Col. 5, lines 24-29). The handle is therefore not formed, as in the case of the present invention, by bending one end of the rod.

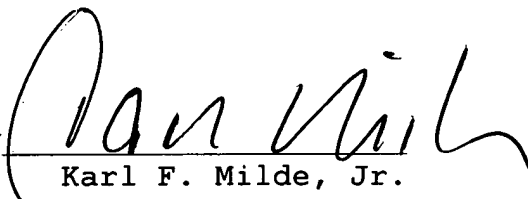
In addition, the "hook" at the opposite end of the rod 1 is formed by a separate, complicated mechanism as shown in Figs. 1-10 of the patent. Applicants avoid all this complexity by simply bending the rod at right angles.

Applicants' claim 23, as well as dependent claims 24-27, are therefore believed to distinguish patentably over Fannin and Hultquist.

As the Examiner will note, applicants' new claims have been formulated to avoid the informalities noted on page 2 of the Office Action.

This application is therefore believed to be in condition for immediate allowance. A Notice of Allowance is therefore respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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